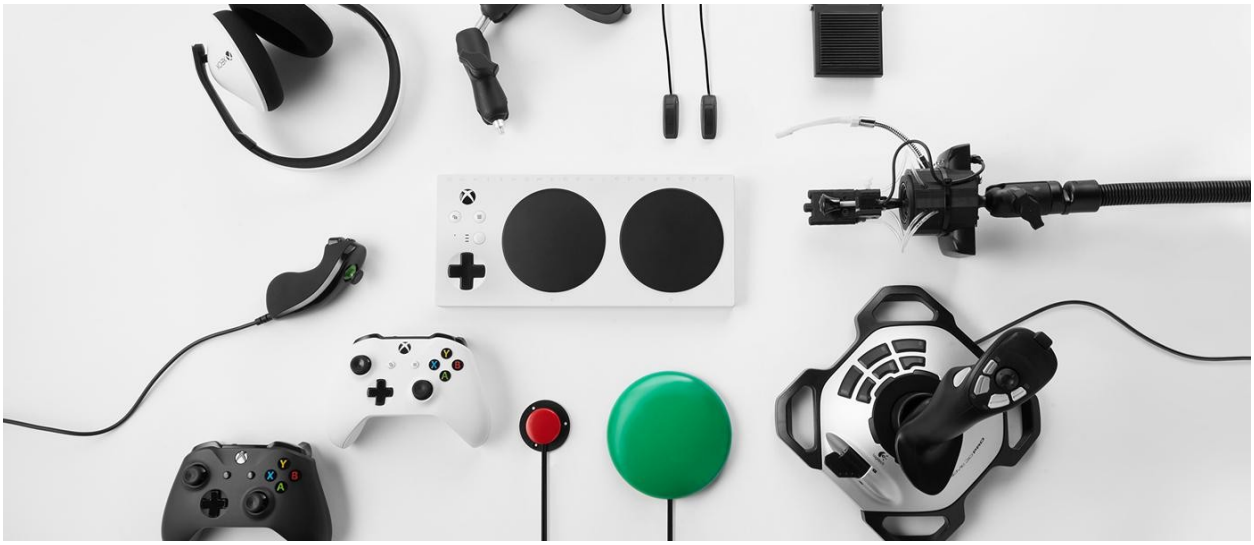


When everyone plays, we all win

Announcements Miss Buffalo May 9, 2019

We strive to make Xbox the most inclusive gaming platform on the planet. We want to empower all gamers to play the games they want, with the people they want, on the devices they want—that includes gamers with disabilities.

We know that many gamers with disabilities can't play games the way they are designed. We've been working to find ways to eliminate this challenge through our design choices and features so everyone can game.

As we mentioned in our letter to you titled "Leading gamers to a better tomorrow," we touched on how you can increase your knowledge of Xbox accessibility features through program-related activities and share that knowledge with others.

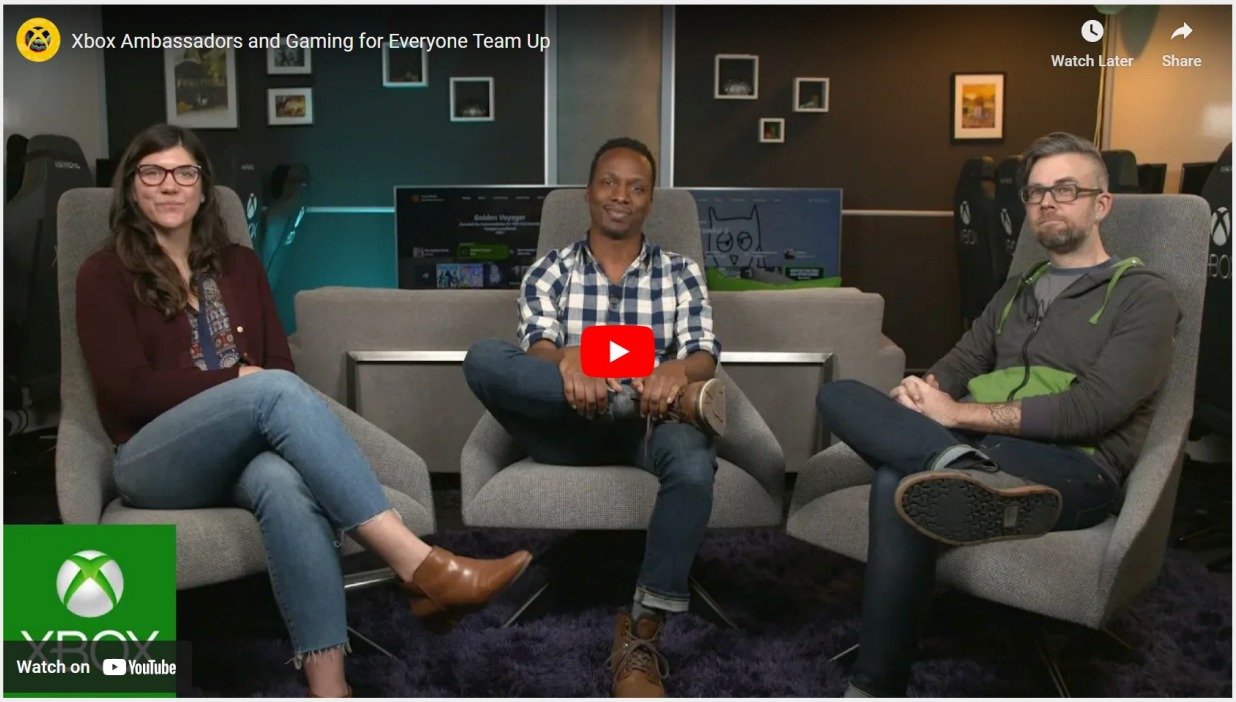
What is accessibility

Accessibility refers to the design of products, devices, services, or environments for people with disabilities. Accessibility features can also be useful for individuals without disabilities faced with situational challenges. For example, gamers in a noisy room might turn on subtitles to understand what's being said in an in-game cinematic.

"Xbox is embracing inclusive design as part of our Gaming for Everyone effort. In this ongoing initiative, every single person on Team Xbox is working together to try to make gaming accessible, equitable and sustainable for all."
– Phil Spencer, Xbox EVP

Accessibility is important to everyone at Xbox and to our Xbox community. As an Xbox Ambassador, you have an amazing and important mission, should you accept, to help bring more awareness and empathy to the greater Xbox community and overall gaming landscape. Let’s do it, together!

We all win



Share knowledge, share fun

The Xbox Ambassadors Team has been hard at work creating new missions and quizzes around accessibility. Our goal is to ensure you are equipped with an understanding of Xbox accessibility features and resources. This way, should you come across anyone who might be able to benefit from one of these features, you can share your knowledge and help them play more easily.

Starting tomorrow, you will see self-reported missions and quizzes centered around trying out and using certain Xbox accessibility features, plus you’ll able to unlock XP.

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Aspects of accessibility

Every gamer is different and has different needs. That’s why we have a have a large selection of accessibility features on Xbox that gamers with a variety

of abilities can take advantage of. These features tend to address challenges in three main areas.

Movement and speech

Different games require different types of movement. Whether it is pressing a button, turning a steering wheel, swinging a motion controller, or using your body as part of a VR experience, almost every game requires some level of movement.

There are many reasons why a person may be unable to move their body in a specific way. There are various diseases and injuries that can make small or large motions difficult or impossible. Similarly, there are numerous situational factors that could prevent someone from being able to move as well as they like. Anyone who has ever tried to eat and game at the same time has experienced this!

Similarly, games often utilize speech as way of communicating between gamers and even sometimes as an input mechanism (like being able to turn your Xbox on or off with your voice). This can be challenging for users who may be unable to produce easily understandable speech or who may not be able to speak at all. There are also situations where a player may not want to speak, such as late at night when gamers may not want to wake up their family members or roommates.

New missions and quizzes to help you understand the solutions available for movement challenges may include:

- Learn about the Xbox Adaptive controller
- Take to the skies in Copilot
- Helpfulness with Speech to Text
- And more

Vision and hearing

Ever try playing your Xbox with your TV turned off? It’s possible! While most games rely heavily on graphics, many gamers who are blind or low-vision play by utilizing assistive technology paired with audio cues that already exist in game.

Hearing is also a critical component in most games. Characters talking help us understand the story, while in-game sounds indicate critical events (like the footsteps of an enemy sneaking up behind you). While some games utilize text for chat, most Xbox titles use voice chat at the primary form of communication.

Like movement, there are many reasons why someone might be unable to see what's on a screen or hear in-game audio. Some individuals are born without vision and/or hearing or lose them later in life due to injury or disease. Additionally, there are situational factors related to seeing and hearing that can make playing a game difficult. Examples include screen glare or gaming in a noisy room.

New missions and quizzes that will help you learn about the solutions available for these types of challenges may include:

- Zoom in crystal clear with Magnifier
- Read your screen with Narrator
- Helpfulness with Text to Speech
- And more

Processing

Our brains are like computers—we take data in through our senses, process it, and then act on it. And, like computers, not all brains process information the same way.

All of us have strengths and weaknesses when it comes to how we think—some people tend to be better at thinking logically or creatively. Some individuals are born with or acquire (through injury or disease) more profound differences that can impact how they process and respond to information.

New missions and quizzes that will show you some of the solutions available for processing differences may include:

- Understand about how others learn
- Different ways to process information
- And more

Other common challenges

It's important to remember that disabilities are not personal health conditions. Disabilities are mismatched human interactions. Medical conditions can cause disabilities. There are far too many medical conditions and disabilities to list, but below is a sample of the types of conditions that may cause disabilities for some of the gamers you are playing with.

- Aphasia

- Arthritis
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Cerebral Palsy
- Color Blindness
- Complex Regional Pain Syndrome
- Depression
- Down Syndrome
- Dyslexia
- Essential Tremor
- Hearing Loss
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Parkinson’s Disease
- Sensory Processing Disorder
- Spina Bifida
- Stuttering
- Vision Loss and Blindness

Generally speaking, you shouldn’t ask someone if they have a disability or medical condition, but if a gamer voluntarily shares that information with you, it never hurts to learn a bit more about what they might be experiencing. As an Xbox Ambassador, you can help make all gamers feel welcomed on Xbox and show certain ways how Xbox can ensure they can keep gaming and having fun.

Xbox is the best place to play

Xbox is the best place to play and we will strive to ensure all gamers continue to game on and game strong. Make sure to look out for those missions and quizzes. Curious to what other accessibility options Xbox offers? Check out ways Xbox makes gaming fun for everyone.